



REPORTER

Millions of Russians for Christ

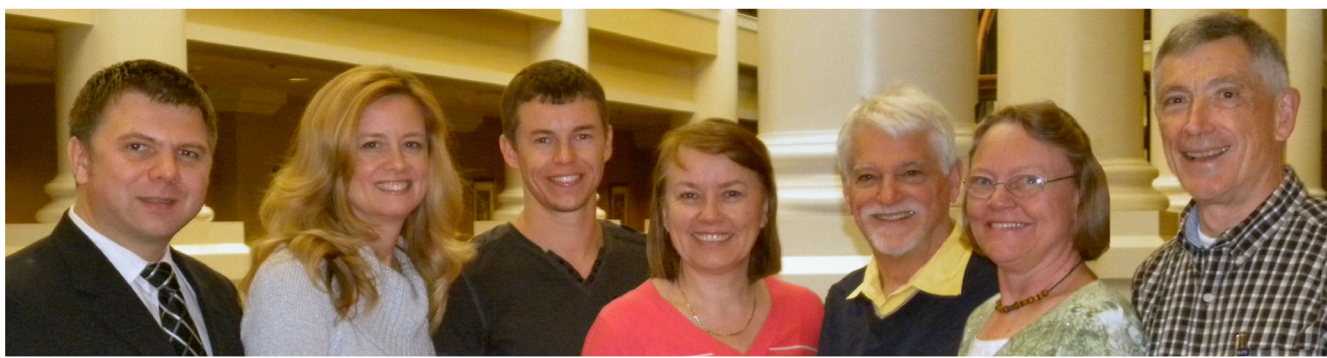


Homes Built on Love

Over the past few years small groups of men and women from America have been blessed with the opportunity to go and work side by side with Russian men and women at the rehab centers we call "Pirkko Homes." Our original purpose in going was ostensibly to help build a building. The building was built, and others in the process, but the real building involves the character of the people. Over the years, 1,000 or more men and women have come to one of our Pirkko Homes, each one bearing the burden of drug or alcohol addiction. They have experienced the "hard things" of life. However, you will not see the desperation that once filled the lives of these residents. You will see hope, joy and the grace of God in a profound way. That has been the experience of all the American teams that have come along side our Russian brothers and sisters.

As one American shared last October, "For Americans living in the South, anything below 60 degrees is winter. We fully expected the weather to be colder than comfort would allow and our expectations were met. We also anticipated that the warmth of the people would well offset the coldest temperature and, again, our expectations were met. We did help with the physical building. The real value was not so much the nails we put into the walls, but more so the nails we saw removed from the past lives of the people. Every morning we met and studied scripture, gave testimonies, sang praise songs, prayed together, and then went to work. The evenings were a repeat of the morning, but with more time available. Russian men are very much like Americans as evidenced by the laughter and fellowship that is always present among the followers of Christ."

It is our most sincere prayer that more American churches will experience the Christian bonds that have made these journeys to Russia a blessing to all who participate. Let us know if you'd like to plan or join a trip. Perhaps your church will be the next to feel the warmth of the Russian people at one of the Pirkko Homes!



RCR Board of Directors

In March of this year, the new RCR Board of Directors met in Marietta, Georgia. As we continue the ministry to which the Lord has called us, RCR is well served by this body. Members include (left to right) Denis Agafonov, Lynn Doty, Alexey Tuchin, Natasha Poysti, Ray Brumbeloe, Sue Shull, Henry Garmon, and more recently Paul Ness (not pictured). Each member has a special connection with ministry in Russia and a shared vision for the original mission statement of our founder, Earl Poysti: “Millions of Russians for Christ.” You will see us refer more and more to our ministry as “RCR” and less as “Russian Christian Radio,” since radio is only one part of our ministry. Radio has been, and will continue to be, foundational to our mission, but through the years the Lord has opened other doors to us: publishing of our *Gospel Behind Barbed Wire* magazine for prisoners and correspondence with prison inmates, and Pirkko Home rehab centers have joined our radio ministry. Our ministry to Russian speaking peoples will continue as the Lord directs us. We are thankful for His guidance, your prayers and partnership, and for the strong leadership He has placed within our Board of Directors.

The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire - RCR's Prison Magazine

RCR's magazine primarily for prisoners, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, is an important part of our ministry, as are our “Pirkko Home” rehabilitation centers and the production of Christian radio programs.

In Russia there are about 1,000 penal institutions. They hold more than 700,000 prisoners and involve 330,000 employees. In 1995, RCR began printing the only post-Soviet magazine for prisoners, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, with the purpose of penetrating the bottom of Russian society, the thieves, rapists, and murderers, with the message of salvation and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Over the last 17 years we have published more than 100 issues. The magazine is highly valued, and is a life-line for believers who are in prison and lack Christian fellowship, as it links them to other believers.

This unique magazine not only provides sermons and articles leading the reader to God; there are also articles offering help from God's Word in dealing with “real-life” problems and issues of concern in the daily lives of the prisoners. Materials sent in by prisoners themselves, such as testimonies and poetry, are also included.

There are a lot of skeptical opinions about convicts - incorrigibly hardened and desperate souls - but the Lord indicates otherwise. His light comes into the jail and He receives repentant, outcast villains in his arms, purifies their souls, and gives them new birth in Jesus Christ. Those who did evil yesterday, can today, in the prayer of repentance, turn to the Savior and receive salvation in Jesus Christ. These gather with other believers in the prison in open areas, in prayer rooms, or where ever allowed, to worship the Lord. When released, these people truly start a new life.

The magazine, *The Gospel Behind Barbed Wire*, is free. It is primarily sent to prison ministers and missionaries who work in prisons, so they may deliver them directly within the prisons. Please pray for our ministry and that the Lord would bless us and give us wisdom in meeting the financial needs of publication and distribution of the magazine, that it might reach everyone who needs it.

To learn more about our ministry, please visit www.rcr.ru/eng.



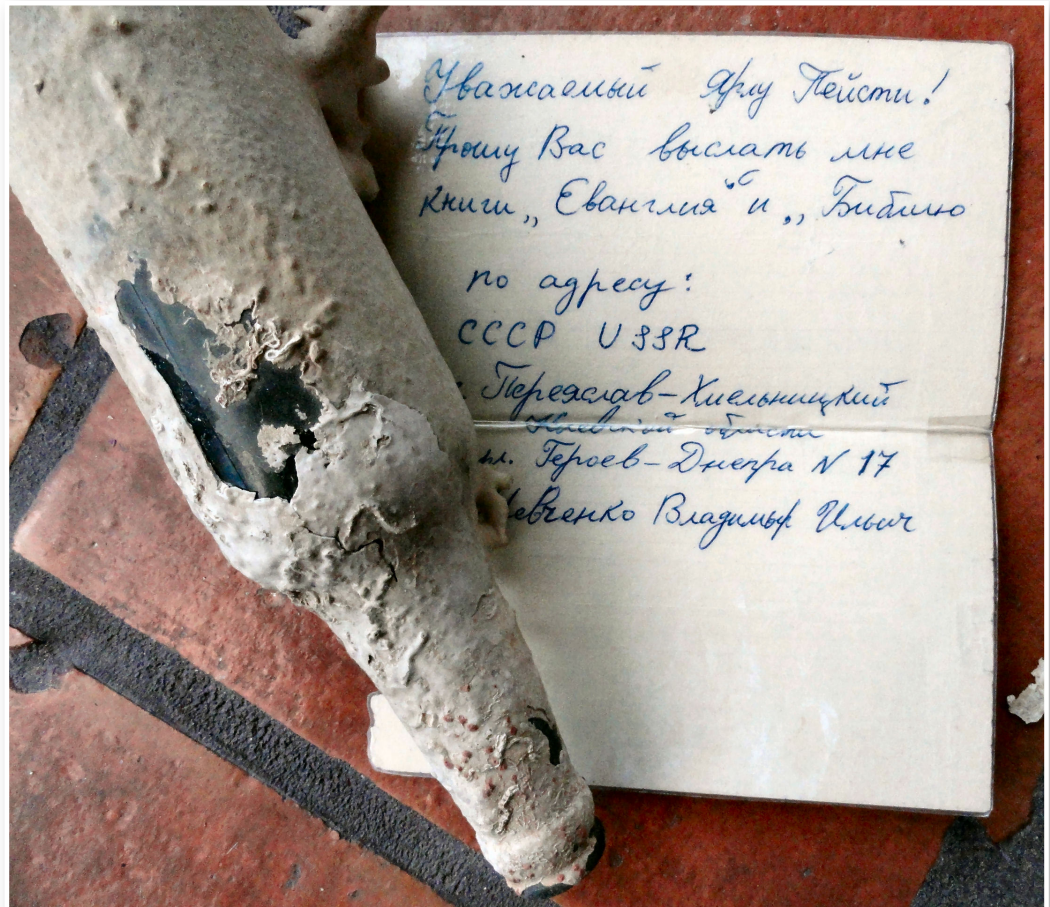
Letter in a Bottle

In 1946, our founder, Earl Poysti, and his father began broadcasting the gospel of Jesus Christ via short-wave radio into the Soviet Union. During this time almost no communication could be delivered into this officially atheistic country. The Soviet government wanted no influence from the west and tried to jam the radio signals. Few letters were able to be delivered into the Soviet Union and most letters leaving were seized before they crossed the border.

Years passed without one single note of encouragement that his broadcasts were even heard, without one single note that the Gospel was reaching the hearts of the Russian people. In spite of this frustration, Earl faithfully continued his mission day after day, year after year, with the goal of “Reaching Millions of Russians for Christ.”

One day, somewhere on the south shore of Sweden, a lady walking on the beach found a well-sealed bottle with a piece of paper inside. By God’s providence she noticed it and didn’t throw it away. She couldn’t read it (since it was in Russian), and it wasn’t until about a year later that someone told her that the Bible Translation Institute may be able to help her find someone to read it.

Imagine the effort it took in those days, after finding a nondescript bottle with a paper written in a strange language, to be determined to see what the sender’s intent was and what the “letter in the bottle” meant! Eventually, the letter was delivered to the addressee: Earl Poysti, in Stockholm. The letter, from a man named Vladimir Shevchenko in Ukraine, requested a Bible, almost certainly because he had heard Earl’s broadcasts over the prohibited short-wave radio station, even though listening could mean serious consequences from the government.



I heard this story for the first time three years ago at a memorial service for Brother Earl Poysti held at Ralston Hills Baptist Church in Denver, as the pastor shared about Earl’s ministry. The story was so fantastic that I turned to the person sitting next to me and asked if it could possibly be true - a “letter in a bottle”? Really??

The person answered, “Haven’t you heard the story before? Last night Natasha (Earl’s widow) brought the letter out and said that Earl had kept it for all these years. It was one of his most prized possessions.”

God delivered this letter through the “iron curtain” – without a stamp... in a bottle... in a foreign language... to a man the discoverer did not know... at an unknown address. How easy to laugh at this, how easy to doubt, how easy to disbelieve. Yet it happened. Don’t we serve an amazing God?!

“Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.”
(John 12:37)

-Ray Brumbeloe, RCR Board Chairman

Testimony of Vyacheslav Kozlov

Director of the Pirkko Home in Emva, Russia



Vyacheslav Kozlov ministering in a prison

Like a shattered ship, I realized I was going to the bottom. Rage and pain filled my heart. "Why is this happening to me?" I saw no meaning in life. Then my eyes fell on a small book lying on the bedside table. It was a New Testament. I took it in my hands and began flipping through its pages, trying to understand. There was no understanding, but I felt some serenity in my heart, and the hope of something better.

I was born in 1960. My older siblings devoted themselves to crime which made it difficult for my mother. I was from a different father, and she hoped I would turn out better.

After my mother died, I came to realize that with her departure, I lost something more - love. Now there was no one to tell me what to do, so I

drank and partied, wanting to take in everything life had to offer. At age 24, I was diagnosed with chronic alcoholism, but I didn't care. This kind of life soon landed me in prison for two years. I had time to think about the meaning of life, but didn't. I attempted to escape, and was given a second prison term. I thought, "I'm here by accident, it just happened," little knowing that prison would become my way of life.

When I was freed, I wanted to try living a "normal life." I got married and divorced, and my grandmother died, all in one year. I constantly had feelings of loneliness but believed I could handle life by myself. Twice more, I was put back in prison, and began to feel the emptiness inside. In one prison colony, I sometimes worked with a believer. He tried to talk to me about God, but I avoided these conversations by saying that my faith was in my heart.

After I was released, it wasn't long before I ended up in court again. For the first time I decided to pray to God. I learned a prayer from one of your magazines and bargained with God, "Lord, if you help me, then I will not touch alcohol anymore!" - and God helped! I was a repeat offender with three convictions, but this time the court released me. "Glory to God!" But my praise to God lasted only a few days. I began drinking with such force that nothing could stop me. I was on the verge of suicide, but stopped at the last minute. I didn't understand what had stopped me then, but now I know Who was with me.

One day, during my fifth prison sentence, a man came into my cell and with a smile said, "Friend, God loves you." The anger seething in my heart rolled off my tongue, "What God?" I was boiling like a tea pot, the sweat rolling off me as I crushed an already lit cigarette in my hand without feeling a thing. He calmly smiled at me as he put a little blue book on the bedside table, then left. I was all in a fever, smoking cigarette after cigarette, feeling like I was hitting bottom. Finally I looked down at that book and started flipping through its small pages. The words of this book gave me a new incentive for life, and a glimmer of hope. It was hard to admit it, yet I believed that God would help me. With a sincere childlike faith, I kept reading the New Testament.

And the miracle happened! From these pages I learned that there is someone who has forgiven me and paid for my sins with His life, our Lord Jesus Christ! He had watched over me in all the situations of my life. He opened my eyes to understand Scripture and revealed Himself to someone who was not looking for Him! (Romans 10:20).

The Lord miraculously led me to where believers gathered. With the power of the Holy Spirit, I realized that the believer is not a weak, but a strong personality, because his strength is in Christ!

Today I live a full life in Christ! He gives me spiritual and physical strength, so I can be His witness to the same weary and oppressed people as I once was. His love leads me to jails and prisons, to help people see the light of His gospel (Matthew 28:19).

Since 2008, I have served as the coordinator of the prison ministry in the Komi region and as the director of the Pirkko Home rehab center in the city of Emva. The Lord gave me a wife in 2009 - the dream of my heart! But that's not all - on my 50th birthday the Lord gave us a son, and later a daughter! I cannot fully express all my gratitude to the Lord, but I desire to live every day devoted to serving Him!

